



## Takeover

*Lisa Black*

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## **Takeover** Lisa Black

In the tradition of Kathy Reichs and Jeffery Deaver, a talented novelist introduces a gutsy forensic investigator caught in the middle of an explosive crisis

Early one Thursday morning, forensic scientist Theresa MacLean is called to the scene of a gruesome murder. The body of a man has been found on the front lawn of a house in suburban Cleveland, the back of his head bashed in. Although it's not the best start to her day, Theresa has been through worse. What unfolds during the next eight hours, though, is nothing she could ever have imagined.

Downtown at the Federal Reserve Bank, her police detective fiancé is taken hostage with six others in a robbery masterminded by two clever criminals. When she arrives at the scene, Theresa discovers that the police have brought in the city's best hostage negotiator: handsome, high-profile Chris Cavanaugh. He hasn't lost a victim yet, but Theresa wonders if he might be too arrogant to save the day this time around.

When her fiancé is injured, she seizes the opportunity to trade places with him. Once on the inside, she will use all her wiles, experience, and technical skills to gain control of the situation. But what initially appears to be a bank heist turns into something far more complex and deadly, and Theresa must decide how much more she is willing to sacrifice in order to save the lives of innocent people as well as her own.

## **Takeover Details**

Date : Published (first published August 12th 2008)

ISBN :

Author : Lisa Black

Format : Kindle Edition 384 pages

Genre : Mystery, Thriller, Suspense, Fiction, Mystery Thriller

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## From Reader Review Takeover for online ebook

### Yvonne (It's All About Books) says

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I keep telling myself that I'm not reading enough mystery/thriller books, so I tried reading **Takeover** by **Lisa Black** to help me get out of my reading slump. It didn't work. Not only does the plot lacks imagination and the pace is dreadfully slow, but the story itself is just plain boring. The whole m

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### Carol says

I can't figure out where I read about this author in the last few days. I read lots of reviews and reader blogs so it may have been on one of these. Or it could have been in an article about September 2009 releases. This is annoying me and I'd like to remember so I could back and see what prompted me to go looking for Lisa Black's first book, *Takeover*. I do know that I was intrigued that Black is a forensic scientist at the Cuyahoga County Coroner's Office and that her character in this book, Theresa MacLean shares this occupation with her creator. I remember reading about this debut novel back in August 2008 but it quickly left my range of consciousness until the announcement of the new book prodded it into my radar.

Reading Lisa Black's *Takeover* sparked the same thrill I felt when first reading Cornwell's *Postmortem*. Though not as heavy on forensics as reader's of that genre might like, *Takeover* is a fast paced, hard to put down, suspenseful read. Taking place mostly in just one day, June 25th, starting at 6:42 AM, I was never bored with the events as they unfolded. Initially there's a dead body, hence MacLean's involvement. The body might be Mark Ludow, a recently hired federal reserve bank employee. Homicide Detective Paul Cleary, MacLean's fiance, begins an investigation at the bank when two persons storm the lobby, grab hostages and are at a standoff as their escape vehicle is driven away by a security guard. Whether or not their intent is to rob the bank is unclear but the hostage situation is a serious one, prompting Cleary who is in plain clothes, not to reveal his ID as a cop, biding his time for an opportunity to nail the bad guys. The hostage negotiator, Chris Cavanaugh arrives and sets up house in a library of all places. The next ten hours are a nail biting, tense ride. The characters are wonderfully drawn, I grew quite fond of Cavanaugh, the story is darn good, and by day's end, you're hoping for another book featuring MacLean and company. Did I see where the story was going, the why of Ludow's death. Yep, but it didn't lessen the enjoyment of the book one iota.

Black's *Evidence of Murder* should be on our shelves soon.

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### Kristen says

This is a great thriller. Set in real time and in the course of one day, it's reminiscent of *24*. We really get involved with Theresa MacLean and her ordeal in this thriller. As a forensic scientist, we're hooked into this thriller, when things go bad to worse. Started out as a crime, we watch Theresa become a strong single mother and in love with her fiance. But when her world's turned upside down by a hostage crisis. As the clock counts down and ticks down the hours, my heart beat races along with my pulse rising. You're really don't know what's going to happen next, until you turn the page and hold your breath. And when we finally find out what she did, we understand why. But we do worry about her fiance until the crushing news in the end. This is a heart-racing thriller to kickstart this series.

## **Teresa in Ohio says**

I chose this book because it is set in my hometown of Cleveland. The author got the details correct on the setting and even the direction of what you see when looking north, south, east or west. With her next book (if there is one) I hope to get that much detail correct with the plot. The day starts with the discovery of a body on a lawn in an exclusive suburb and ends with a bank robbery gone wrong. The main character works in the Crime lab and is dating a cop who works the case. It is typical bank robbery gone wrong and hostages are taken. The fresh take is that we get concise details on how law officials attempt to end a stand off peacefully. The end came at me at a little fast and I guessed wrong on the motive and then with some rethinking figured out who was really behind the robbery and the ending was realistic.

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## **Melissa says**

Good book but it wasn't as thrilling as I would like. I prefer more action and in some parts it was a little slow. However I would definitely try more from this author.

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## **Denise says**

2.0 out of 5 stars Implausible sophomoric effort, July 17, 2008

This review is from: Takeover (Hardcover)

Possible spoilers. I was really disappointed in this book == it never quite got off the ground. The premise -- a forensic scientist somehow gets involved in hostage negotiations during an attempted robbery of a Federal Reserve Bank - was implausible and poorly developed. The characters were one dimensional and never developed into people I could find any degree of sympathy or concern for. It was completely unbelievable that a forensic scientist would have been involved in any kind of situation like this except at very periphery, certainly not in the "war room" or next to the negotiator -- especially when we found out that her fiance was one of the hostages. She would not have been allowed anywhere in the area. Then, inexplicably, she's exchanged herself and is now a hostage. From inside the bank as a captive (the robbers would have killed a real person who did the things she did or said the things she said a million times over) she figures out the story and makes it out alive. Someone else doesn't live -- which I HATE when authors do this. What would I want to know before I purchased this book? To skip it. And by the way, there was hardly ANY forensic science in this whole book.

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## **Robert says**

What really stuck out in my mind more than anything else as I was reading—and even now as I sort through my thoughts as I purge my brain and write this review—was the setting. The detail and painstaking care with which Lisa Black conveyed Cleveland led me to believe she had either lived there or had done an extensive amount of research on the city. So finding out she was a Cleveland native who felt like she had been violently and dramatically uprooted and shoved in the direction of Cape Coral, FL didn't surprise me nearly

as much as it could have. If you like setting to become a minor character in your reading material, and you hold a certain place in your heart for Cleveland, then you'll probably enjoy this one.

Whether I realized it or not—and to be perfectly honest I hadn't given it much thought before reading TAKEOVER and writing this review—I actually hold a place in my heart for Cleveland and similar industrial cities. Growing up an hour and a half south of Pittsburgh, I had no problem taking the blue-collar mentality to heart, and I like to think I still harbor a bit of that tendency even now. And this almost sounds sacrilegious with Pittsburgh always looming on my horizon, but I actually like Cleveland, as long as it's not the middle of winter. More so than other cities I've seen, there seems to be a vast and distinct contrast between the old and the new. That dichotomy has always given it a bit of a pop, and that burst of energy is felt throughout this novel, seeping through every fiber of every page.

But this novel isn't all blue collared shirts and punch clocks, it causes serious men to face serious consequences for their actions, and the ticking clock looms like an albatross in the background, as various deadlines are put in place. And that's where the novel strayed for me a bit, as it felt, at times, like a paint-by-the-numbers hostage situation with rising tension and violent interludes.

I ended up racing to the end of this book, not because I had to finish it, but because I needed to finish it, so I could abruptly shift my focus to the next novel looming on my Kindle. The novel felt a bit too formulaic for my tastes. Moving to the sunshine once again, there's a linebacker crushing twist waiting for you at the end, if you stick around long enough to find it.

Cross-posted at Robert's Reads

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### **Minty McBunny says**

I read book #6 first by accident and really enjoyed it. This book, however, was not nearly as good. I like Teresa, but the hostage situation caused the story to really drag, it was much too long for the story it told and the reveal of what was actually happening was done in a very awkward and ham-fisted manner.

Since I know the series gets better, I will go on to read the next one, but if it's as much of a struggle to get through as this one, I may skip ahead.

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### **Paul Pessolano says**

Theresa MacLean, a forensic scientist, in Cleveland, Ohio is called to look into the murder of Mark Ludlow. Mark was found outside his house with fatal head injuries. Mark is discovered to be an employee of the Federal Reserve Bank.

Two escaped convicts have taken over the Bank and are holding hostages. Among the hostages is Theresa's lover and police officer, Paul Cleary. Also, the wife of Mark Ludlow and their young son are part of the group.

A hostage rescue team is called in headed by Chris Cavanaugh. Chris has written the book on hostage negotiations and has written a book about the subject. He has never lost a hostage in numerous hostage situations.

Theresa becomes intrinsically involved when Paul is shot by one of the convicts and she negotiates his release by taking his place.

The suspense builds as Chris tries to negotiate a peaceful resolution. However, he finds it tough going as the convicts reject plan after plan.

There are several sub-plots within the story that keep the reader thinking and wondering about what will happen next and to whom. You have, Cherise, a female hostage who is killed for no apparent reason. Do the convicts have explosives and what do they intend to do with them. Why does one of the convicts want to talk to his brother and wind up killing him?

The culmination takes place in the getaway car with Theresa, Chris, Mark's wife and son, and one of the convicts trying to make his escape. It is only at this time that Theresa is able to put everything together and make sense of all that was happening around her. It provides for a much unexpected ending.

An excellent read for all mystery fans, and one that should keep you in suspense until the final chapter.

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### **Maureen says**

I liked Theresa Maclean a lot even though in this book she didn't do much forensic deducting, but did use her deducting abilities to figure out why they were hostages in a fed bank...I will read the next one...

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### **Tiffany says**

I'll be brutally honest here, the only reason for why I read this book was because I was going through my bookshelves and doing inventory of all the books that I have, and setting aside the ones that I no longer wished to have on my shelves. I wasn't sure if I wanted to keep this book or if I wanted to part ways with it forever. Since I've done a serious re-read of this book and took a far more in-depth look at the book, I have decided to set it on the pile that's heading out to the monthly library book sale.

There is a few reasons for why I no longer wish to keep this book. I will go through each of these reasons in detail with this review.

1. I am not interested. I had read this book so many times, and since I had wanted to become a forensic scientist for years, I thought that this book would interest me. It served its purpose when I was young and stupid, but then when I realized that this book is not at all an accurate representation of what forensic scientists do, I no longer liked it.

2. The character. Theresa MacLean is incredibly judgmental in the book series. I am not talking exclusively about Takeover, but her thoughts and the way she presents herself when she interacts with certain people is very off-putting to me. The second book in the series has Theresa call a victim of the crime 'a drug addled slut', when that is not the case at all. The whole purpose of a Forensic scientist is to remain objective and to look at the evidence and to actually work with that evidence to figure out what happens to the victim.

The fact that she doesn't do this in this book (or the other books in the series) makes me want to throttle her.

3. Theresa is confused about her job. Is she a police officer or is she a forensic scientist? Theresa is very

good at reminding the reader, and those that work with her or in the law enforcement field, that she is a forensic scientist, not a cop. Yet, throughout this book, and the series as a whole, she's doing police work when that isn't her career. She's seen literally tagging along with her big, bad cousin (who is a police officer), doing the same thing he did, putting herself into the line of fire and even more than that, constantly putting her life in danger, when that is not what she should be doing.

She's a very one-dimensional character, and I am not sure if Black thought it would add more suspense if Theresa was constantly the damsel in distress for her own stupidity, or if somebody recommended more suspense and this is the only thing that she could come up with, but it was very poorly done.

Now, I did like the overall book and its plot, but I did not like the characters, and I especially hated reading about Theresa.

The overall plot of the book is this: Theresa MacLean is a forensic scientist who is called out to a crime scene in the suburbs of Chicago. Now, it is discovered in a very short time, the the victim and his wife worked at the bank, and Paul (Theresa's fiance) decides to go to the bank to see if he can find out any information. While, Theresa is moping about a new case and how she is so holy and sublime because she's a forensic scientist, not a police officer, the bank is taken over by a group of thugs. Once Theresa finds this information out, she forgets that she is a forensic scientist and has a job to do, leaves her place of work, and heads out to the hot zone where she can watch all the action and mope and angst over the fact that Paul is one of the hostages.

Now, when I was a teenager, this book was just full of suspense. I loved this book when I was stupid and had no brain. However, now that I've read it as an adult, I can say that this book is very poorly written. I can't stand Theresa. Her attitude, the fact that she is so judgmental, the knowledge that she doesn't know who or what she is as a professional. It just made me so incensed.

I happened to find the first four books in this series on my shelves. The first one Takeover is maybe 2.5 stars at most. It had an interesting premise, and there might have been a little suspense that made me happy enough to last out the entire book. There was absolutely no character development. Theresa is the same weak, pathetic, whiny, moronic woman throughout start to finish. She is even the same in the entire series.

The second book in the series: Evidence of Murder is definitely a big fat one star. Theresa MacLean is a judgmental bitch. Throughout the entire book, we see her moaning and groaning about the fact that she's got to work on this case. She even calls the victim Jillian a drug addled slut throughout the case. Even if that was true, she had no business (as a forensic scientist) to ever say that about the victim. It's victim blaming at its finest. Not only that, but it was completely inaccurate.

The third book in the series: Trail of Blood- I would give this book perhaps a 3.5 star rating if there weren't pages missing out of the book. I believe I got the second, third and fourth books from a secondhand bookshop, and didn't look them over when I purchased them. From what I could see of the book, I believe it was a good thriller/suspense, and it definitely had an engaging mystery. However, the last couple of chapters had been ripped out of the book. So, I threw that one away.

It's just, Theresa is the same old character. I don't believe I'll ever buy this book again. If I can't stand the character, then I most definitely won't like the book. However, if it is at the library, I'll definitely read the final seven chapters.

The fourth book in the series: Defensive Wounds. I actually really liked this book out of all of them. The suspense and mystery was just engaging, and like the first book, I was definitely very surprised to learn who did the crime. However, it isn't a book that I'll get back to, and I am going to get rid of it.

There is very rarely a book series that I can't stand after reading the first few books. However, the Theresa MacLean series is one that definitely left me tearing my hair out in frustration. I definitely expected a lot more out of this book than I did. The author herself is reportedly a forensic scientist herself. Perhaps this character is a self insert, and a very poorly developed/written one. There were certainly some aspects of the books that were good, but I just wish that the author could focus on which career Theresa is in. Is she a police officer or is she a forensic scientist? She can't be both.

Another reason for why I am parting with this series is because every bad thing that happens in the book, somehow involves Theresa. She is seen as a constant damsel in distress. It gets a little old after awhile. Perhaps the series gets better after the fourth book, but I don't think I'll ever find out for myself.

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### **Jodi says**

I had a variety of problems with the story in the beginning. She chose to set this at the Federal Reserve Building in Cleveland even though the Fed is not allowed to provide any information about its layout or how it works. She kills a compliance examiner even though I am not sure she knew what that meant. It won't matter to most people but I am a compliance officer. It is my industry! It was difficult to remember that our main character is a forensic investigator not a cop. The premise was that there was a hostage situation at the fed and one of the hostages is the fiancé of the forensic investigator. She will do anything to get him back. Once the story starts moving, which takes much too long, it moves swiftly and the motives unwind in a way that keeps the reader interested trying to figure it out before the cops. But it's a sad story even though since it is book number one, I suspect we will see impressive character growth. I would read book two.

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### **Daniel says**

Here's the set-up:

*A forensic scientist and her fiancé, who is police, find the dead body of some banker guy.*

HEROINE: I have to find out how he died.

FIANCE: Bye honey! I have some leads to follow.

*Someone is robbing the bank! The banker guy used to work here! Mr. Fiance is one of the hostages!*

HEROINE: I have to save my fiancé.

EVERYONE ELSE: What are you doing here? Let the experts handle this one.

EXPERT NEGOTIATOR: I have a perfect record for saving hostages.

EVERYONE ELSE: Dude, you so should not have said that.

*Something fishy is going on about this whole bank robbery...*

HEROINE: Something fishy is going on.

EXPERT: Lady, I wrote the book on this stuff. And I have a perfect record!

*Fast-forward to...our heroine infiltrating the bank!*

BANK ROBBER: I am so smart. No one knows what I am up to.

HEROINE: I do!

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Let me be clear: while I am poking fun at this book, it is, in fact, a good read. Black paces the plot well and pulls back the curtain one inch at a time and then presents the big reveal with a writerly flourish and a hectic showdown. My main concern with the whole enchilada is that our main character, Theresa MacLean, is the only person who uses her brain in this story and figures out what's going on. Everyone else, whether expert or investigator, fills up space and time and plays out her or his role according to type until it is necessary to make way for MacLean's insights. I'm all for intelligent heroes; I just prefer that they bring along some smart friends.

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## Georgev says

I agree with Denise: "Implausible and sophmoric." Protagonist a forensics staffer, finace a hostage in a Fed Bank situation. At times during this situation the main character has snarky thoughts about people around her that are implausible for a person in such distress. The author is a member of The Academy of Forensic Sciences and I am certain she does a good job within. That being said this author needs an editor and grammar specialist pronto. Commas abound with no rhyme or reason making it a very difficult read. 80% of sentence structure is tossed to the wind. One grammatical issue: "There's" is often used in a plural context. This has become quite common among many younger authors. As a test I took 5 pages and cleaned them up by omitting 30% of the extra baggage and it read so much better. A sentence begins with "And". Okee dokee.

The basic story could be a nail biter but the read is clouded by the mess that is the delivery.

Many publishers have done away with editing cost and staff and that is to the detriment reader and author.

I will not be investigating Lisa Black books in the near future.

My suggestion to this author is to read several Stella Rimington books for flow, structure and grammar.

-Dazed and Confused

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## Christy says

Theresa MacLean is a forensic scientist called to gather evidence at the murder of a bank officer which her fiancé, homicide detective Paul Cleary, is investigating. Later that morning, she learns that Paul has been taken hostage in a bank robbery which occurred at the bank where the slain man worked. Theresa heads to the scene and meets acclaimed hostage negotiator Chris Cavanaugh. Theresa convinces Cavanaugh to allow her to stay on during the negotiation and watches in horror as her fiancé is shot by one of the armed robbers. In an effort to save Paul's life, Theresa approaches the robbers and asks that she be exchanged for Paul. The robbers agree, and from that point on, things spin out of control.

This book has the makings of a good thriller, but the initial slow pace and lack of characters with real depth distract. A forensic scientist makes for not only an entertaining but an edifying read; however, there is very little forensic information relayed in the book. Theresa takes too long to figure out what's actually going on and can't seem to keep her emotions in check. The robbers' rationalization for robbing the bank is not plausible; there is a much simpler way they could have accomplished what they were trying to achieve.

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